

## Westminster Police Department

### Press Release

Kevin Baker, *Chief of Police*

8200 Westminster Blvd.  
Westminster, CA 92683  
(714) 898-3315

Sergeant Eddie Esqueda, PIO  
Office: (714) 548-3754  
Media Hotline: (714) 548-3213



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### Westminster Police Department To Hold Zero Tolerance Distracted Driving Enforcement Operation

**Westminster, CA.** – In an effort to save lives and eliminate dangerous behind-the-wheel distractions like talking, texting, or browsing on a cell phone, and as part of April's *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* campaign, the Westminster Police Department will be actively ticketing those texting or operating hand-held cell phones on April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Drivers who break the law and place themselves and others in danger will be cited with no warnings. The current minimum ticket cost is about \$162, with subsequent tickets costing about \$282.

Distracted driving is a serious traffic safety concern that puts everyone on the road at risk. In recent years, hundreds have been killed and thousands seriously injured in California as a result of collisions that involved at least one driver who was distracted. As a result, law enforcement agencies across the state, including Westminster police, are cracking down on cell phone use and texting. This April will see over 225 statewide agencies plus the CHP conducting zero tolerance enforcements. Whether it's a ticket or a crash, as the campaign theme states, "It's Not Worth It!"

"We all know that talking on our cell phones while driving is distracting, but that doesn't stop some people from continuing to do it," said Westminster Police Sergeant Esqueda. "This effort is intended to educate our community about the dangers of cell phone use while driving. We hope that once people realize the danger involved, they will change their driving habits to help protect themselves, their families, and others on the road."

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. In addition, studies show that texting while driving can delay a driver's reaction time just as severely as having a blood alcohol content of a legally drunk driver. According to research, sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 5 seconds. When traveling at freeway speeds, or 55 mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field.

<http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police/>

## Westminster Police Department

### Press Release

Kevin Baker, *Chief of Police*

8200 Westminster Blvd.  
Westminster, CA 92683  
(714) 898-3315

Sergeant Eddie Esqueda, PIO  
Office: (714) 548-3754  
Media Hotline: (714) 548-3213

Studies also show that there is no difference in the risks between hands-free and hand-held cell phone conversations, both of which can result in “inattention blindness” which occurs when the brain isn’t seeing what is clearly visible because the drivers’ focus is on the phone conversation and not on the road. When over one third of your brain’s functioning that should be on your driving moves over to cell phone talking, you can become a cell phone “zombie.”

To avoid a distracted driving ticket or crash, Westminster police offers drivers the following tips:

- Turn off your phone or put it on silent mode, then put it out of reach while driving
- Record an outgoing message on your phone that tells callers you’re driving and will get back to them when you’re off the road
- Adjust controls and set your song playlist before you set out on the road
- If it’s urgent, pull over in a safe place to place a call
- Focus on driving, and avoid eating, drinking, reading, grooming, smoking, and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road